2: Mountford E-5 (1954) 1958
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412 short, cylindrical stick, about three-sixteenths of an inch in diameter. This was dipped in the colour and transferred to the painting surface with the brush held as in Fig. 2B.

FIG. 2. *Methods of Holding Brushes*

4. THE ARTISTS

531 As with other aboriginal groups with whom I have worked in Central and
[463] Northern Australia, there is no special artist class; all aboriginal men and
[302] women of the Tiwi, would, on occasions, be required to paint designs on the bodies of one or another of their relatives, or on objects, particularly those associated with the *pukamuni* ceremony.

Some men, however, were looked upon as being more skilled than others in some particular field, i.e., cutting and decorating the burial poles, or the ceremonial spears, painting the large bark baskets, or the bodies of men and women who take part in the *pukamuni* or *kulama* ceremonies.

On Pl. 1 are four men who were regarded as good craftsmen and artists.

Pulanimbuwi (Pl. 1A), hard-working and meticulous in all he did, produced the unusual *pukamuni* pole (Pl. 35); two other poles as human figures (Pl. 37A, B; 37E, F), and a number of bark paintings; Pl. 13B, D, and Pl. 14C, D, being typical.

Inbidjarmeri (Pl. 1B), being fully employed by the Superintendent of the nearby settlement, was unable to make bark paintings for me. He was most expert in carving and painting the beautiful, multi-barked ceremonial spears. Pl. 32B is his work. He was also in great demand for decorating the performers for the *pukamuni* and *kulama* ceremonies. Pl. 28K and Pl. 28B are examples of his craftsmanship in this field.

●115 *Tjamalampua* (Pl. 1C) and *Malumerinita* (Pl. 1D) are two men to whom I

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115 owe much, not only for the many bark baskets and paintings they made, but also for the wealth of information they so courteously imparted to me about the creation of their world, their totemic ancestors and the philosophies of their people.

These two old men are the storehouses of the tribal beliefs and philosophies. As the younger men are no longer taking a deep interest in their tribal lore, the passing of *Tjamalampua* and *Malumerinita* will be an irreparable loss to the aborigines of Melville Island.

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[178]

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1. THE CREATION OF THE LAND OF THE TIWI

773 In the beginning there was no light, the earth was flat and featureless; no hills or valleys broke its monotonous surface, no trees covered its nakedness, no call of birds disturbed its quietness. It was a dead, silent world.

Then, at some period in those dim and far-off times, known to the Melville Islanders as the *palaneri*, an old blind woman, *Mudungkala*, rose miraculously out of the ground at Murupianga, south-eastern Melville Island, carrying in her arms three infants, two girls, *Wuriupranala* and *Murupiangkala*, and a boy, *Purukupali*.[10] No one knows from where she came, nor after she had finished the creation of the land of the Tiwis, where she went.

Clasping her children to her breast and crawling on her knees, *Mudungkala* travelled slowly northward, the fresh water, that bubbled up in the track she made, becoming the swift tideway of Dundas Strait now separating Melville Island from the Coburg Peninsula on the mainland (Fig. 1).

Mudungkala then turned westward, and, as she formed the northern shores of Melville Island as far as Cape Van Diemen, she made occasional journeys inland, creating the Johnson and Lethbridge Bays, Curtis Haven, the Tjipripu River, Shark Bay, and the northern entrance of Apsley Straits.

Mudungkala, still carrying her children, crawled along the west coast of Bathurst Island until she reached Cape Fourcroy, creating Port Hurd on the way. On Turiturina Island in Port Hurd, the mythical bird-men and women, and later, the *Ningaui* spirit people, performed the first *kulama* ceremonies.

At Cape Fourcroy, the old woman turned toward her starting place, Murupianga. One side of the wide channel she created became the southern shores of Bathurst Island, where, at Maundu, the dreaded *Marapiis* made their home.

But when *Mudungkala* reached the present Jurubulinai (Buchanan Island), she thought she was making the island too large. So, remembering the deep inlet near Cape Van Diemen, she crawled northward, her track becoming the winding Apsley Straits that now separate Melville from Bathurst Island.[11] She then turned back, felt her way to Jurubulinai[12] at the southern end of

● [115] [10] Not all the informants mentioned *Purukupali*, although, in the creation period, it was *Purukupali* who brought the spirit children, the *Pitipitui*, to their mothers.

[11] At this point in the creation story, some informants interpolated a myth that describes how *Mudungkala*, under a different name, was speared by *Puruti* (sea osprey) and *Jirakati* (sea-eagle). This myth, described on page 26, is obviously an accretion.

[12] In the last phase of creation, this island was the totem place of a woman of a similar name, *Mudungkala*, one of the wives of *Tukimbini*. At present we do not know the correct relationship between these two women; further research no doubt will clarify the situation.

2: Mountford E-5 (1954) 1958
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6. THE BARK PAINTINGS OF THE TOTEMIC PLACES

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The aborigines of Melville Island produced forty-five bark paintings dealing with the totemic localities of Melville and Bathurst Islands. The assistance of the two aboriginal artists, *Tjamalampua* and *Malumerinita*, and Mr. W. E. Harney, who had spent many years on the islands, coupled with the aboriginal names on the official map of Melville and Bathurst Islands, and my increasing knowledge, enabled me to locate the approximate position of twenty-five totemic areas associated with the bark paintings.

[115]

The Honey-eater Bird-man, Tukimbini, at Murupianga

Four bark paintings deal with the myth of *Tukimbini* and the totem place he created at Murupianga, south-eastern Melville Island; Pl. 4A, B; Pl. 4C, D; Pl. 6C, D; Pl. 7A.

The circle *a*, on Pl. 4A, B, is a mangrove swamp on a low island adjacent to Murupianga, *b*, *b*, and *p*, *p*, *p*, being rocks on its shore. The long sandy beach at Murupianga is shown at *d*, and a shoal at *j*. At *e* is a stingray, *h*, a dugong, *k*, a turtle, and *l*, a diamond fish. At *f*, *f*, etc., are piles of dead leaves on the beach, and at *s*, *s*, *s*, and similar designs, stringy-bark trees growing along the shore. A freshwater spring is at *t*, with two trees growing from its banks. Bunches of sea-weed are at *g*, and *r*, *r*, *r*, and at *s*, on the left-hand side of the painting, are the tree-covered uplands at Murupianga. The totemic place, Wuriupi, created by the woman, *Wuriupranala*, and her son, is at *m*.

On Pl. 4C, D, a jungle near the shore at Murupianga,[87] is indicated by the central black disc, *g*, and the camps of the bird-man, *Tukimbini*, are shown by the symbols, *a*, *a*, etc. The circle, *d*, *d*, pictures high, white cliffs, adjacent to the totemic jungle; *k*, is a monsoon forest tree; and *f*, *f*, its limbs; at *h*, *h*, are living paper-bark trees, at *b*, *b*, *b*, dead jungle trees; and at *c*, *c*, etc., poisonous yams, similar to the *kulama* (Pl. 44D), which *Tukimbini* created for food. The dots on the painting indicate the red seeds of a jungle vine lying on the ground.

Pl. 6C, D, is one side of a *pukamuni* basket;[88] the holes at *a*, *a*, show that it is a female basket.

[87] In the companion bark painting, Pl. 4A, B, the totemic place is a mangrove swamp. Within the same area, as with *Mundukutu*, south-western Bathurst Island, several adjacent localities are associated with the same totemic being.

[88] Klaatsch (1907), p. 377, who saw this type of basket on an old grave, states that, according to the aborigines, it indicated the burial place of a woman. Though it may be that Klaatsch was correct, my informants simply referred to the *pukamuni* baskets as male and female, as they did to male and female *pukamuni* spears (Pl. 32A, B). No female baskets were used at the *pukamuni* of the woman, *Makapini*.

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where they have not suffered from ecclesiastic prohibitions, are still using a [178] similar form of grave and posts.

Major Campbell (1834, p. 158), writing of a grave he saw on Melville Island in 1826, states: "It (the grave) is surrounded by upright poles, many of which are formed at the top like lances and halberts, 14–15 feet high, and between these the spears and waddies (probably of the deceased) are stuck upright in the ground."

Brown (1905, p. 28) found a grave on Luxmore Head, in Apsley Straits surrounded . . . "by wooden slabs, portions of which had been burnt. Aboriginal markings were faintly discernible in places on the wood, some of the posts had the wood cut away from the outside toward the centre, leaving a short spike standing up in the middle of the post."

Klaatsch (1907, p. 257), in referring to the same burial poles at Luxmore Head, writes: "In some examples the slab was so carved that the upper part was only connected with the lower by two thin pillars or, on others, the top was mushroom-shaped.

"It is easy to see that the aborigines used fire for this work of sculpture, scratching the burnt part away with shell."

Basedow,[99] in 1911, came across a grave of an infant, on Bathurst Island, surrounded by five simply decorated posts, which had "been cut and carved with a sharp bladed instrument, in all probability a tomahawk."

Basedow persuaded the aborigines to renovate the designs, which did not vary greatly from those in use at the present day.

[114] Spencer,[100] in 1911, made sketches of many of the burial poles, and arranged for the aborigines to redecorate a group which was later displayed in the [177] National Museum, Melbourne. He states (1928, p. 682) that: "It (the pole) was slowly and laboriously cut with an iron tomahawk, but formerly with a sharp shell, until it has the form decided upon by the artificer."

Dr. Kenneth Fry, who visited Melville Island in 1913, was the first investigator to ascertain the meanings of a number of poles. These, with his permission, are illustrated on Fig. 8. All of these shapes, but two, are those still most commonly used among the hundred or more which I saw on Melville Island.

● [115] An old aboriginal, *Tjamalampua*, told me that in *pulaneri* times, i.e., a long while ago, before there were any steel axes, the aborigines used stone axes to fell the hollow trees for *pukamuni* poles. Although there were just as many poles around the grave as there are today, they were neither as

[99] Basedow (1913), p. 314, Fig. 4, Pls. 13, 14, 16, 17, 18.
[100] Spencer (1928), p. 682, Figs. 473–7, Pl. X.

2: Mountford E-5 (1954) 1958
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CHAPTER IV

The Kulama Ceremony

114 881 ALTHOUGH little has been recorded about the colourful *pukamani* burial rituals of the Tiwi, several investigators have published details of the *kulama* ceremony.

Spencer saw a *kulama* ceremony during March 1912. His records of those rituals (Spencer, 1928, pp. 658–76), the most complete we have, show that, [178] during the last forty years the pattern has not changed to any extent. Although the names of the initiation grades given by Spencer do not agree with those recorded by later investigators, it is likely these differences are due to Spencer's interpreter, the buffalo shooter, Joe Cooper, who was not then fully conversant with the ceremony.

Fry (1949, p. 176), during 1913, witnessed an initiation ceremony in which Reuben Cooper, Joe Cooper's half-caste son, passed from the *Kolloponiati* (my *Kilipaniati*) stage to that of a *Wadjeniati*.

In the same year Fry (1950, pp. 79–80), saw the closing phases of the *kulama* from the peeling of the yam (p. 138), to the final rituals (p. 142). Although Fry was mistaken in considering that this ceremony was part of a burial rite, his record is a valuable and accurate description of the last two days of the *kulama*.

Hart (1930, p. 286), recorded the *kulama* initiation names and the duration of the grades of both male and female initiates. These names correspond closely to those I was able to obtain from the fully initiated men, with one exception. Hart stated that the grade of *Mikingula*, i.e., the fully initiated, lasted for four years. This is obviously incorrect, as the *Mikingula*, being the final grade, lasts for life.

178 881 It appears certain that Tiwi initiation has ceased, although, I feel sure, within comparatively recent times. The *Mikingulas* often talked about initiating some of their companions, but when the opportunity came, they procrastinated.

115 881 However, the same fully initiated men gave me full details of the rituals at each stage of initiation, explained how those rituals fitted into the *kulama* rituals we had witnessed, and either decorated themselves, or painted designs

2: Mountford E-5 (1954) 1958
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on sheets of paper to illustrate the body markings used at each stage of initiation.

To give a complete account of the full *kulama* which included initiation as well as the preparation of the yam for food, I have included both groups of rituals, as they would have been performed in the original *kulama* ceremony. However, it must be borne in mind that we witnessed only the rituals belonging to the *kulama* yam. As stated before, the details of initiation were obtained from the fully initiated men.

1. THE MYTHOLOGICAL ORIGIN

(1) *The first Kulama Ceremony*

During *palaneri* (creation) times, not long before the death of *Purukupali*, when all the animals and birds were still men and women, *Purutjikini*, a boobook owl-man, and his wife, *Pintoma*, a barn owl-woman, decided to perform the first *kulama* ceremony at Turiturina, in Port Hurd, south-western Bathurst Island (Fig. 1). They invited *Jirakati*, later the white-headed sea-eagle, and *Tupatupini*, the small owl, to be present, planning to make them the first initiates. Many other people assisted in the ceremony, the *Ningauis*, a small spirit people who still live in the mangrove swamps nearby; *Inwati*, *Mauwini* and *Taparalili*, three groups of the honey people; *Jirakupai*, the sea-going crocodile; *Narina*, the black cockatoo, and *Jurumu*, the wedge-tailed eagle.

Tukimbini, *Wuriuprinili* and a number of ancestral people from the eastern end of Melville Island, being opposed to the holding of the *kulama* ceremony, did not attend.

At the ceremony, the white-headed eagle, *Jirakati*, was the first *Wadjeniati* initiate (he still wears the ceremonial paint), and the owl, *Tupatupini*, the first *Mikinatrina*. There is no mention in the creation myths of the other grades of initiation.

When the first *kulama* ceremony was finished[18] the participants returned to their homes until the *pukamuni* of *Purukupali*, which was performed at the end of the *palaneri* (creation period). It was then that *Purutjikini*, the leader

[18] Some informants referred to a fight which took place at the first *kulama* in which *Purutjikini* was attacked because he did not wait for some late-comers. Others described another quarrel which started when one of the *kulama* men followed a woman of the Kaiakumuniri group into the mangrove swamps and raped her so badly that she died.

The Kaiakumuniri people attacked the performers of the *kulama*, killing some and driving others into the mangrove swamps where they live today as the *Ningauis*. The more elderly informants, *Tjemalompua* and *Mokumirinia*, however, said that there were no quarrels at the first *kulama*.

6: Hart E-5 (1928-1930) 1954 OI20 Tiwi OI20

all these day-to-day activities of ordinary elementary field work, are, one presumes, based upon some common-sense judgments about the "personalities" of the natives with whom the anthropologist is living in rather intimate association.

Unfortunately the conventions of anthropology are such that it is just this sort of material which is never published and yet it would seem to be precisely this sort of material, if organized and systematized a little, which would throw light upon the amount of individual personality variation and the range of personality types which are to be found in the simpler societies. Too often the old-fashioned anthropologist, asked what he knows about the "personality" of his tribe, is apt to reply rather defensively, "Well, nothing much; you see I didn't pay much attention to toilet training when I was there, nor was I competent to give Rorschachs and T.A.T.'s." If, instead of being intimidated by the question, he would take the trouble to recall the ten natives he knew best (in the sense of knowing that is involved in the everyday statement "I know him pretty well") and attempt to describe briefly the "personality" of each of the ten, he would, one suspects, be astonished not only at how much common-sense knowledge he has of the personalities of the men he is describing but also at the range of difference that they exhibit.

As a crude sample of what would be revealed if the ordinary fieldworking anthropologist would make some attempt at "personality description" along such lines, there is offered in this paper a very superficial and cursory examination of the "personalities"[1] of five Australian aborigines whom the writer believes (perhaps erroneously) he got to know reasonably well *as people*, in the course of field work among the tribe to which they belonged— the Tiwi of Melville and Bathurst Islands, North Australia. One cannot live with any tribe for two years, especially in the very primitive and intimate living conditions of nomadic Australian life, without getting to know certain individuals better than others, and two of the five men in question were not only trusted informants and advisers but also twenty-four-hour-a-day companions for weeks at a time. The basis of selection of these two, Mariano and Tipperary, is that the writer knew them over a long period of time and was able to observe them under a great variety of circumstances.[2] The addition of the other three—Antonio, Louis and Bob—is suggested by the fact that they were brothers or half-brothers of the first two, all five having a common mother, a woman named Bongdadu. The selection of a group of brothers for intensive study is justified in the present context by the self-evident fact that if, as is alleged by the personality and culture adherents, a common culture, with common toilet training, common family conditioning, etc., produces homogeneous personalities in the simpler societies, then such homogeneity of personality should be all the greater in a group of men who not only are products of the same culture but grew up in the same household, and were suckled, reared and toilet-trained by the same mother.

The Tiwi, who numbered 1,062 people in 1928-30, are divided into nine hordes or subtribes scattered over two islands. The southern section of Bathurst

6: Hart E-5 (1928-1930) 1954 OI20 Tiwi OI20

usually wives and children only, but this life lived in an isolated household is broken in upon at intervals by short interludes of the "collective life," when members of numbers of households gather together for ceremonies, legal proceedings, fights and initiations. If we may call these two types of living the public life and the private life of the adult male Australian, then we may say that Antonio was very happy in private life and uncomfortable in public life. The two activities which made him happiest were playing with his children and hunting with his dogs. When left alone by society to do these two things Antonio was a kindly, patient, gentle, good-natured and relaxed man, but in all social relations with other adult men he was nervous and uncertain of himself. One might hazard the opinion that it was because children and dogs made no great demands upon him that he was happy and at ease with them, but people he found very trying since they were always expecting him to "take a stand" or to make a decision and this was something he had no talent for, something which did not "come naturally" to him, and something which gave him no satisfaction. Turimpi's mantle had fallen on a man who just wanted the world to let him alone, who preferred his home, his family and his dogs to any rewards which public life could give him.

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MARIANO

Mariano was first encountered in Port Darwin before the writer had got to the Tiwi. Finding me waiting for transportation to the islands, Mariano offered to come with me and act as my chief interpreter and informant. As he appeared a very intelligent and mature member of the tribe, I promptly hired him. Or so I thought at the time. Events were to prove that what had happened was that Mariano had appropriated me. For Mariano was (in his own opinion, at least) the only possible person fit to escort and advise a white man visiting the Tiwi. He had created something of a monopoly in the job of white man's escort and adviser. The beginning of this not unusual native profession went back, in his case, to the foundation of the Mission station. When the missionaries arrived in 1911 and began to build their mission houses Mariano became almost immediately the principal go-between of Mission and natives. As far as the situation of 1911 can now be reconstructed the factors operating to select Mariano for this position were merely suitability of social status, availability and willingness to undertake it. As already mentioned, the Mission was established at the southeast tip of Bathurst Island. This was Tiklauila territory and at that time the dominant family among the Tiklauila was that of Turimpi. Of Turimpi's sons, Antonio, the eldest, was about 28 or 29, Mariano was about 25 and Louis, the third son, was a youth not yet 20. Antonio's role as eldest son was already fixed, Mariano's, as second son, was still flexible. Antonio was personally unaggressive except when forced into taking a strong stand, Mariano (we may speculate) was already more forceful and more prone to draw attention to himself by aggressive behavior.[8] Mariano was just ready in 1911 to emerge from the age group of young men who should, according to Tiwi ideas, be seen and not heard into the age group of "junior adult men" who

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6: Hart E-5 (1928-1930) 1954 OI20 Tiwi OI20

121 theorists," says Boas, "assume a mental equipment of primitive man distinct from that of civilized man. I have never seen a person in primitive life to whom this theory would apply. There are slavish believers in the teachings of the past and there are scoffers and unbelievers; there are clear thinkers and muddle-headed bunglers; there are strong characters and there are weaklings" (1951). It is noteworthy that this (for Boas) unusually flat and definite statement was made in an attempt to demolish the views of Levy-Bruhl that between civilized man and the primitive there is an impassable psychological gap. Perhaps—as Tipperary would say, if he understood the matter—perhaps, the personality and culture movement is merely Levy-Bruhl in modern dress, perhaps the latent content of the movement is to deny to the people of the simpler cultures the ordinary elementary human qualities of individual difference and human variation, thereby enabling "personality" and "individuality" to be treated as unique creations of the white races to be found only among the followers of the American way of life. If this indeed be the latent content of much "personality and culture" literature, it seems to warrant a flat and unqualified rejection, in terms as emphatic as those of Boas, by all those anthropologists who, like Boas, may not know projective tests but do know something about the simpler native societies.

NOTES

121 [1] In view of the wide discrepancies in the use of the word "personality" it must be made clear again that all that is meant by the word here is the level of description one is apt to get if in ordinary social conversation one asks the question, "What sort of person is he?"

115 [2] The native names of these men are all polysyllabic and difficult for the reader to remember. I use therefore the names bestowed upon them by white men, to aid in keeping them distinctly in mind. The Spanish names, Antonio, etc., were bestowed by certain Filipino carpenters who built the building for the Roman Catholic missionaries when they first arrived. Tipperary is, of course, a white corruption of a native name.

159 [3] It will be noticed by close students of the above information that Turimpi must have been born in the 1830's, Bongladu born somewhere around 1865. She had her first child when she was about 16 or 17, at which time her husband Turimpi was at least 50. This is a perfectly normal Tiwi marital situation, the commonest marriage arrangement being one in which a newly-born female child is betrothed by her father to a man in his thirties.

159 177 [4] Even from the anthropologist Dooley would not accept tobacco until he had convinced himself that in return he would not be required to sacrifice any of his principles. Nor would he take his son, to whom he was passionately attached, to the Mission station for medical treatment—perhaps the most striking proof of the uncompromising attitude that Dooley had adopted toward the Mission.

159 [5] Such a speculation about Mariano's personality at the age of 25, seventeen years before the author knew him, is based upon the general belief of social scientists that personality does not change much between 25 and 42, and the particular evidence of the older missionaries that Mariano was "already inclined to throw his weight around" when they first arrived.

13 182 837 [6] Goodenough (1949) is apparently one of the few anthropologists to discuss the relation between extra-marital sexual activity and the opportunities provided by the nature of the physical environment. The point here is slightly different; whether the Tiwi physical environment encourages adultery is uncertain since a social system such as theirs would promote adultery whatever the physical environment, but it certainly helps to increase the suspiciousness of husbands.

837 [7] That seduction has to be a daytime activity is implied in what has already been said. After sundown the women are concentrated in their husband's camp and have no opportunity. Which

12:Goodale E-5 (1954) 1957 O120 Tiwi O120

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Fig. 2. Dolly. The painted necklace is her ornament for the day.

was the increasing flocks of geese flying over to the east of us to their feeding grounds in the freshwater swamps at the head of the Paluwiunga River. Since the Superintendent of the settlement had a plan to build a permanent camp for future crocodile hunts near this very spot, this seemed an ideal time for all concerned to make a trip to this area.

As there was a shortage of water transport (only four dugout canoes and one small motor launch), the main group of twenty men, women, and children was taken in the canoes across Snake Bay the day before and left to "foot-walk" along the coast to the Paluwiunga. The Superintendent and his son went ahead in the motor launch and I followed the next day in "number one" canoe with my chosen companions. I had originally invited my chief informant Dolly and her husband Malony, but they had had a "proper row" a few nights previously and weren't speaking. Dolly would have come alone because the object of this row, her boy-friend, Billy-Two, was going, but public opinion was too strong in view of the very recent objection by her husband, and she begged out of the trip. In their place the choice of Albert and Agnes was obvious. They had been close associates of the expedition and of mine since our arrival. They were a young couple in their early twenties, but recently married, and very much in love—there would be no complicating boy-friend problems with them. But above all, Albert loved to hunt and he was a good man to be with in the bush. He was a quiet, serious young man and very modest about his accomplishments. Because of this he was not a good informant for native lore or customs; he would always refer us to the old men who knew much more than he. However, he was a conformist to these

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12:Goodale E-5 (1954) 1957 O120 Tiwi O120

lores and customs, and if the white people were disappointed by his performance in settlement work, the old men of the tribe were just as pleased by his attitude to his native heritage.

Agnes, a slim tall girl of twenty, was even shyer than Albert and to cover up this shyness she always smiled or giggled. She was a cheerful soul to have around. Feeling that the responsibility of the care and feeding of the *murandanga* (female white person) was a little more than their young shoulders could bear, Albert asked Big Jack, his older brother, a "big man" in the tribe to come along. At the last minute a fifth member was added, Tchuwiunga, a tiny black-and-white puppy of about eight weeks old.

Number one canoe was the largest canoe and was considered the safest. The Malay fishermen, a century or more ago, had taught the Melville Islanders how to hew a rough canoe from a single log, but the art had never been perfected. This canoe measured about fifteen feet in length by about three feet in width at the center. There were small platforms in the bow and stern which

Fig. 1. Setting off in Number one canoe